

Disability Awareness Month

ADVOCATE GUIDE TO MOCK PARKING TICKETS

Advocacy with parking accessibility

Inappropriate use of reserved parking spaces is a continual problem for people with disabilities, as drivers who do not require accessible spaces still park in reserved spaces at local stores, businesses and other public places. But in 1998, a state law passed allowing the establishment of a volunteer parking patrol or reserve police force to monitor the use of reserved spaces. And in response, the Indiana Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities is working with communities across Indiana to help enforce the new law.

You can get involved in one of two ways. You could organize a group of advocates to monitor local parking lots and place photocopies of the enclosed mock parking ticket on the windshields of cars illegally parked in accessible spaces. Or you could organize a volunteer parking patrol to complete instructional courses taught by local law enforcement officials. Upon completion of the classes, the volunteer parking patrol has the authority to issue valid parking tickets to violators in their community.

Several communities in Indiana have already created parking patrols to enforce the use of reserved spaces. This packet includes case studies of those patrols, as well as camera-ready artwork of a mock parking ticket and information to assist you in starting a parking patrol in your community.

What the mock parking tickets can achieve

By distributing the Indiana Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities' mock parking ticket every time you see a car parked in a reserved space, you help raise public awareness of an important disability issue – accessibility. Making drivers aware of the violation is the first step in stopping this problem. The mock ticket is not an actual citation or warning but is a reminder that, when placed on the vehicle's windshield, alerts drivers that Indiana police can issue tickets and fine drivers a minimum of \$50 for parking in reserved spaces. Useful

information also is included on the mock ticket, enabling those who qualify for accessible parking spaces to request the necessary identification for their vehicles.

What the laws say

State legislation prohibits parking in a reserved space without a disability placard or special vehicle license plate. Violation can result in a fine of \$50 or more. A law enforcement agency may also appoint volunteers to issue tickets for violations. A complete copy of Indiana legislation IC5-16-9-11 regarding volunteer parking patrols and parking facilities for persons with physical disabilities is attached. The laws regarding placards are contained in Indiana legislation IC9-14-5-1. This law specifically refers to the issuance of placards, placement and display of placards on vehicles, and expiration periods.

Who monitors spaces

Law enforcement officers can monitor and ticket spaces on public streets and any property within their jurisdiction. A state law allows the establishment of a volunteer parking patrol or reserve police force to monitor the use of reserved spaces. According to the statute, volunteers must complete instructional courses by a law enforcement agency. A parking complaint or fine issued by a trained volunteer has the same force and effect as one issued by a law enforcement officer.

Information on communities with parking patrols and their local contacts is included with this packet. There are currently four Indiana patrols, in Columbus, Indianapolis, Kokomo and St. Joseph County.

How you can help

You can be an advocate in your own community. Any time you see a vehicle parked in a reserved space without a placard or other license plate for use of accessible parking, place the mock parking ticket on the windshield. You also can photocopy and distribute the mock parking ticket within your own organization and add your group's logo at the bottom of the ticket. A sheet of mock parking tickets is included with this packet for you to photocopy and distribute to your own local organization.

Under the ADA, stores are responsible for ensuring that designated spaces in their lots are kept open for people who need them. Stores can be encouraged to adopt a policy of monitoring spaces, notifying customers about violations and towing people who park illegally.

If there is no volunteer patrol in your town, you can work with others to create a patrol with local officials in your community. For a free copy of the booklet, *Forming a Community-Based Advocacy Organization*, or for additional copies of the mock parking ticket, contact the Council at (317) 232-7770 (voice), (317) 232-7771 (TT), (317) 233-3712 (fax), GPCPD@gpcpd.org (e-mail).

Sample mock parking tickets

The attached sheet contains camera-ready artwork of the advocate mock parking ticket. Please feel free to photocopy and distribute the tickets to your local community organizations or advocate groups. Space has been left at the bottom of the mock ticket for you to include your local contact information or to place your organization's sticker or logo.

To request a copy of the mock ticket, please contact the Governor's Planning Council at (317) 232-7770 (voice), (317) 233-3712 (fax), GPCPD@gpcpd.org (e-mail). Written requests should be mailed to: 150 W. Market St., Suite 628, Indianapolis, IN, 46204.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES JOIN FORCES TO FORM PARKING PATROLS

Who they are

There are currently four Indiana communities – Columbus, Indianapolis, Kokomo and St. Joseph County – with parking patrols monitoring use of reserved spaces. In each of these cities, advocates, local officials and interested citizens have worked together to enforce laws controlling accessible parking.

What they have done

Columbus

Susie Gleyze is the chairperson of Mayor Fred Armstrong's Committee for Persons with Physical and Mental Challenges. The citizen's group, including people of varied backgrounds

and occupations and people with disabilities, works to enforce disability codes and accessibility laws.

In August 1997, the Committee contacted individual members of Columbus' city council to advocate passing a local ordinance to patrol and enforce the use of accessible parking spaces. In September 1997, the ordinance passed unanimously, and a parking patrol was formed to ticket and fine violators.

"Some of the stories you hear of able-bodied people parking in reserved spaces are ludicrous," said Gleyze. "We've worked hard to educate people and raise awareness in the community about why issues like this are so important."

For cities without a committee for disability and accessibility issues, Gleyze offers suggestions for starting a group:

1. Establish a mission, goals, group name and specific projects to accomplish.
2. Openly discuss the current state of the community and get beyond the past.
3. Raise community awareness of disability issues and explore new avenues of action.
4. Meet frequently and develop subcommittees based on individual members' interests.

Indianapolis

Sheriff Jack L. Cottey has announced that the Marion County Sheriff's Department currently has a number of volunteers certified to issue tickets for violation of reserved parking spaces. It kicked off its Parking Enforcement Volunteer program on January 31, 1998, when volunteers wrote their first tickets for violation of reserved parking spaces.

Sheriff Cottey said the volunteers are assigned to certain areas at specific times to issue tickets, and are not authorized to write tickets at will. Volunteers work in the Marion County Sheriff's Department service area.

According to Sgt. Rebecca Lake of the Sheriff's Department, the volunteers have completed an eight-hour classroom training consisting of Indiana state law, Sheriff's Department requirements and personal safety procedures. They are now going through field training.

"We don't just turn people loose to write tickets," Lake said. "We have deputies go out with the volunteers the first few times to make sure they are comfortable and knowledgeable with their duties. We will continue to induct volunteers once the first group is completely trained."

Requirements to train as a parking enforcement volunteer are similar to other Sheriff's Department positions: must be at least 21 years old, a U.S. citizen, a Marion County resident, have an Indiana state-issued ID or driver's license, no felony convictions and no misdemeanor convictions in the last five years.

Kokomo

The Kokomo Police Department Handicapped Parking Enforcement Patrol was created in 1989 through a joint effort between the Kokomo Police Department and the Mayor's Advisory Council for Challenged Individuals. The patrol is comprised of people with disabilities, and is staffed by 10 volunteers including a senior coordinator.

Kokomo was the first Indiana city to establish a parking patrol to monitor accessible parking spaces, according to Lt. Tom DiNardo. The community relations unit of the police department administers the patrol, which is staffed solely by civilians and volunteers, many of whom are people with disabilities.

DiNardo said the police department works with the Mayor's Council to find appropriate volunteers. Council membership is a requirement of serving on the patrol.

"We have been contacted by many other cities wanting to model our training program," DiNardo said. "We were consulted on recent legislation regarding the parking patrol and received the Governor's Exemplary Award for Law Enforcement for this project."

The training includes eight hours of classroom-specialized curriculum relating to state and local law, professionalism, ethics and unusual enforcement situations. There is also a short internship when volunteers ride with an experienced parking patrol person. When the volunteers issue their first tickets, the trained parking patrol members work with them to offer guidance and supervision. At the end of the training, the volunteers take an oath of office and receive a certificate of appointment by the chief of police.

The mission of the patrol is to:

1. Raise awareness and sensitivity among residents about the importance of accessible parking spaces.
2. Ticket cars in violation of the Kokomo parking ordinance.
3. Maintain accessible spaces designated for the use of people with disabilities.

St. Joseph County

There have been complaints of parking violations in St. Joseph County and surrounding Northern Indiana counties for a long time, according to Larry Phillips, president of the Disability Rights Commission of South Bend, Mishawka and St. Joseph County. People continue to park illegally in reserved spaces, even though state law prohibits it.

After numerous complaints to the Commission and endless examples of people misusing reserved spaces, a cause for action became clear. A volunteer parking patrol was developed in 1998.

Phillips said the 13-member Commission had to be authorized by the local police department, prosecuting attorney's office and other government officials. Liabilities were checked, laws were reviewed and Commission members were trained and certified to become a part of the volunteer parking patrol. Volunteers were certified after completing training classes in January conducted by the county sheriff and police departments in St. Joseph County.

Now the Commission members can ticket and fine drivers who violate reserved parking spaces. In local shopping malls, security guards and off-duty police officers are authorized to issue tickets with property owners' permission.

Local contacts

For more information about forming a volunteer parking patrol, contact local coordinators of existing Indiana parking patrols.

Columbus

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Indianapolis

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Kokomo

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St. Joseph County

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